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S E C R E T ULAANBAATAR 000310

STATE FOR EAP/CM, PM, AND NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/23/2018

TAGS: MARR PREL IZ MG

SUBJECT: MONGOLIA'S DECISION CYCLE ON TIMING FOR POST-UNSCR ARRANGEMENTS

REF: A. STATE 60836 B. STATE 5589 C. STATE 4865

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARK C. MINTON FOR REASONS
1.4 (A), (B), AND (D).

¶1. (S) As requested in reftels, the Ambassador, DCM, E/P Chief, and DATT have approached counter-parts in the Government of Mongolia (GOM), to include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' State Secretary and the Acting Director General for the Americas, Middle East, and Africa, the Foreign Policy Advisors to the President and the Prime Minister, and Ministry of Defense officials, to convey in broad terms the USG's thinking and sound out the GOM on post-UNSCR arrangements. This is a particularly delicate time for Mongolia, as nation-wide parliamentary elections are scheduled for Sunday, June 29. At the end of May, the National Security Council (comprising of the President, Prime Minister and Speaker) reportedly decided to recommend sending a 10th rotation to Iraq to replace forces scheduled to depart in July. We have learned this from several reliable sources and expect this week to receive formal notification of the 10th rotation. We understand the NSC's decision has yet to be endorsed by the larger cabinet, the bulk of which are MPs currently actively running for re-election in their constituencies. Thus, in post's view, it would be a bit premature to press the GOM hard on its plans regarding coalition participation for 2009 and beyond.

¶2. (S) The GOM has earlier signaled its preference to operate under a UNSC resolution, adding that its current troop deployment at Camp Echo in support of Polish forces there is governed by an MOU worked out between the two nations. We earlier discussed with the GOM, in very general terms, the possibility of a U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces (SOFA) agreement which might be extended to include Mongolian forces, but we have not/not engaged them in specifics in this regard, pending guidance from Washington. The GOM earlier indicated it would withdraw its forces when the Poles withdraw at the end of September or early October, though there is some indication now that Mongolian forces might remain in place until somewhat later, perhaps into November or early December, ostensibly to allow an orderly handover of its Camp Echo security responsibilities. We understand U.S. forces will now take over Camp Echo from the Poles but that this decision has not yet been formally conveyed to the GOM by Washington. In sum, the GOM will need a clear picture on legal arrangements by early August to allow the newly formed Mongolian government, which will be seated after the June 29 Parliamentary election, to consider its options for continuing the mission prior to the late September or early October withdrawal of Polish forces.

MINTON